

Airborne Laser flies at Albuquerque balloon fiesta

by Rich Garcia, Directed Energy Directorate



UP, UP AND AWAY — Floating just above the water, a balloon representing the Airborne Laser program makes a practice flight in preparation for the Kodak Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta that began October 7. One of approximately 1,000 balloons this year, this balloon featured an artist concept of an aircraft-mounted laser destroying a missile in flight. The balloon flew throughout the nine-day fiesta to draw attention to the Air Force's efforts to put together a speed-of-light defense against Scud-like missiles. The program is managed at Kirtland AFB, N.M.. Also featured at this year's Fiesta was a booth that explained the work taking place on the Airborne Laser and two performances by a combo from the Air Force Band of the West. The group, based at Lackland AFB, Texas, performed the morning of October 7 and during the night-glow on October 8.